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THE TESTAMENT OF *CRESSEID.*

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THE TESTAMENT OF *CRESSEID.*

A Dolefull ſeaſon to a carefull dite,
Should correſpond, and be equivalent:
Right ſo it was, when I began to write,
This Tragedie, the weather right fervent:
When Aries in midſt of the Lent,
Showres of hail can from the North deſcend,
That ſcantly from the cold I might defend.

Yet nevertheleſſe, within mine Orature,
I ſtood, when Titan had his beams bright
Withdrawen down, and ſyled under cure,
And fair Venus, the beauty of the Night,
Up-roſe, and ſet unto the Weſt full right,
Her golden Face in oppoſition,
Of god Phœbus direct deſcending down.

Throughout the Glaſſe her beams braſt ſo ſore,
That I might ſee on every ſide me by:
The Northern winde had purified the Aire,
And ſhed the miſty clouds from the Sky:

The frosts friezed, the blasts bitterly,
From Pole-artick came whilling, loud and shill,
And caused me remove against my will.

For I trusted, that Venus Lovers Quæn,
To whom, sometime, I heght obedience:
My faded heart of love she would make græn,
And thereupon, with humble reverence,
I thought to pray her hie magnificence,
But for great cold as then, I letted was,
And in my chalmer to the fire can passe.

Though Love be hot, yet in a man of age,
It kindleth not so soon, as in Youth-head,
Of whom the blod is flowing in a rage,
And in the old, the cowrage douke and dead,
Of which the fire outward, is best remead:
To help the Physick, where that nature failed:
I am expert, for I have both assailed.

I mend the fire, and bæked me about:
Then took a drink my spirits to comfort,
And armed me well, from the cold thereout,
To cut the Winter-night, and make it short.
I took a Quair, and left all other sport,
Written by worthy Chaucer glorious,
Of fair Cresseid, and worthy Troylus.

And there I found, after that Diomed,
Received had that Lady bright of hew:
How Troylus near out of wit abaid,
And wæped sore, with visage pale of hew,
For which vain hope his tears can renew,

While

While esperance reioyced him again,
Thus whiles in ioy, he lived whiles in pain.

Of her behest he had great comforting,
Trusting to Troy, that she should make retour,
Which he desired most of earthly thing.
For why? she was his only Paramour:
But when he saw passed both day and hour
Of her gain-come, then sorrow can oppresse,
His wotull heart, in care and heavinesse.

Of his distresse, me needs not to rehearse,
For worthy Chaucer in the samme Book,
In goodly tearms, and into jolly verse,
Compyled hath his cares, who will look.
To breake my sleep another Quair I took,
In which I found the fatall destiny
Of false Cresseid, who ended wretchedly.

Who wots, if all that Chaucer wrote was true,
Nor I wot not, if this Narration,
Be authoriz'd, or feigned of the new,
By some Poet, through his invention,
Made to report the Lamentation,
And woful end of this lusty Cresseid,
And what distresse she tholed, and what dead.

When Diomed had all his appetite,
And more fulfilled of this fair Ladie:
Upon another set his whole delight,
And sent to her a Letter of Repudie,
And her excluded from his companie:
Then desolate she walked up and down,

And

And some men sayes, into the Court common.

O fair Cresseid, the flowre and A-per-se
Of Troy and Greece, how wast thou fortunate,
To change in filth all thy femenitie,
And be with fleshly lust so maculate?
And go amongst the Greeks air and late,
So gigglot-like taking thy foul pleasance,
I have pitty thou should fall such mischance.

Yet nevertheless, what ere men deem or say,
In scornfull Language of thy brucklenesse:
I shall excuse as far-forth as I may,
Thy woman-hood, thy wildom, and fairnesse,
The which Fortune hath put to such distresse,
As her pleased, and nothing through the guilt
Of thee, through wicked language to be spilt.

This fair Ladie in this wise destitute,
Of all comfort, and consolation:
Right privily, but fellowship on foot,
Disaguised past far out of the Town,
One mile or two, unto a Mansion,
Builded full gay, where her Father Calchas,
Who then amongst the Greeks dwelling was.

When he her saw, the cause he can enquire
Of her coming: she said, sighing full sore;
From Diomed had gotten his desire,
He wor weary, and would have me no more.
Quoth Calchas, Daughter, weep thou not therefore,
Peradventure, all cometh for the best,
Welcome to me, thou art full dear a Guest.

This

This old Calchas after their Law was tho,
Kæper of the Temple as a Priest:
In which Venus, and her Son Cupido,
Were honoured, and his Chalmer was neist,
To which Cresseid, with bail anough in breist,
Used to passe, her prayers for to say:
While at the last, upon a solemn day,

As custome was, the people far and near,
Before the noon, unto the Temple went,
With sacrifice devote, in their manner:
But still Cresseid heavy in her intent,
Into the Church would not her self present,
For giving of the people any deeming,
Of her expulse from Diomed the King.

But past into a secret Oratour,
Where she might weep her wofull destiny:
Behinde her back she closed fast the dor,
And on her knees bare fell down on hy:
Upon Venus and Cupid angerly,
She cryed out, and said on this same wise;
Alace! that ever I made you sacrifice.

Ye gave me once a divine responsall,
That I should be the flowre of Love in Troy:
Now am I made an unworthy outwaill,
And in all care translated is my joy.
Who shall me guide? who shall me now convoy?
Since I from Diomed, and noble Troylus,
Am clean excluded, as abject odious.

O false Cupid, is none to wyte but thou,

And thy Mother of Love, the blinde goddesse:
Ye caus'd me alwayes understand and trow,
The sæd of Love was sown in my face,
And ay grow græn through your supplie and grace:
But now, alace! that sæd with frost is shorn,
And I from Lovers left, and all forlorn.

When this was said, down in an extasie,
Ravished in spirit, in a dream she fell:
And by appearance hard where she did lye,
Cupid the King, ringing the silver Bell:
Which men might hear from heaven unto hell:
At whose sound, before Cupid appears,
The seven planets, descending from their Sphears;

Which hath power of all things generable,
To rule and stir by their great influence,
Weather and winde, and courses variable:
And first of all Saturn gave his sentence,
Who gave to Cupid little reverence:
But as a boustеous Churle on his manner,
Came crabbedly, with austern lok and chear.

His face frozned, his lyre was like the Lead,
His tæth chattered, and checkered with the chin,
His eyes drowped how sunken in his head,
Out of his nose the mell drop fast can rin:
With lips bla, and cheeks lean and thin:
The yce-shokles that at his haire down hang,
Was wonder great, and as a Spear so lang.

Out over his belt his lyart locks lay,
Feltered, unfair, over-fret with frosts hore:

His

His garment, and his guise full gay of gray,
His withered weed from him the wind out-wore;
A bousteous Bow into his hand he bare,
Under his Girdle, a flush of fellon flanes,
Fethered with Yce, and headed with Hail-stanes.

Then Jupiter right fair and amiable,
God of the stars in the firmament,
And nowrish to all things generable,
From his father Saturn far different:
With burly face, and browes bright and brent,
Upon his head a Garland good and gay,
Of flowres fair, as it had been in May.

His voice was clear, as chrystal was his een:
As golden wyre so glittering was his haire:
His garment and his guise full gay of green,
With golden lists, guilt on every gaire:
A burely Brand about his middle bare:
In his right hand he had a grounden Spear,
Of his Father the wrath from us to wear.

Next after him came Mars the god of yre,
Of strife, debate, and all dissention,
To chide and fight, as fierce as any fire,
In hard Harnesse, Hewmond, and Habergion,
And on his hench a rousty fell Fauchion,
And in his hand he had a rousty sword,
Writhing his face with many angry word.

Shaking his sword, before Cupid he came,
With red visage, and griesly glowring een:
And at his mouth a buller stood of foam,

Like

Like to a Boar, whetting his tusks keen,
Right Souldiour-like, but temperance in teen:
An Horn he blew, with many a boustreous brag,
Which all the world with war hath made to wag.

Then fair Phœbus, lantern, and lamp of light,
Of man and beast, both fruit, and flowrishing,
Tender nowrish, and banisher of night,
And of the world, causing by his moving,
And influence, life in all earthly thing:
Without comfort of whom, of force is nought,
But all must die that in the world is wrought.

As King royal, he rode upon his Chaire,
The which Phaeton guided sometime upright:
The brightnesse of his face when it was bare,
None might behold for piercing of his sight:
This golden Cart, with fiery beams bright,
Four yoaked Steeds full different of hew,
But bait or tyring through the Spheares drew.

The first was lore, with mane as red as Rose,
Called Eoy, into the Orient:
The second Steed, to name, hight Ethios,
Whittish and pale, and something ascendent:
The third Peros, right hot, and right ferbent:
The fourth was black, and called Philogie,
Which rolled Phœbus down into the Sea.

Venus was there present, that goddesse gay,
Her Sons quarrell for to defend, and make
Her own complaint: clad in a nyce array,
The one half green, the other half sable black:

Wi-

With hair as gold, kemmed, and shed aback,
But in her face semed great variance,
Whiles perfect truth, and whiles inconstance,

Under smilling, she was dissimulate,
Provocative with blinks amorous:
And suddenly changed and alterate,
And angry as a Serpent venomous,
Right pungitive, with words odious:
Thus vertant she was, who list to take keep,
With one eye laughing, and the other weep:

In tokening, that all fleshly Paramour,
Which Venus hath in rule and governance:
Is sometimes swet, sometimes bitter and sowre,
Right unstable, and full of variance,
Mingled with careful joy, and fair pleasance:
Now hot, now cold, now blyth, now full of wo:
Now grœn as leaf, now withered and ago.

With Book in hand, then came Mercurius,
Right eloquent, and full of Rhetorie:
With polite tearms, and delicious,
With Pen and Ink to report all ready,
Setting songs, and singing merrily,
His hood was red heckled out over his crown,
Like to a Poet of the old fashion.

Boxes he bore, with fine Electuars,
And sugered Syrops for digestion:
Spices belonging to th' Apothecars,
With many wholesome swet Confection:
Doctor in Physick, clad in Scarlot Gown,

And

And furred well, as such one ought to be:
Honest and good, and not a word could lie.

Next after him, came Lady Cynthia,
The last of all, and swiftest in her Sphear:
Of colour black, busked with horns twa,
And in the night she list best to appear:
Hew as the Lead, of colour nothing clear:
For all her light she borrowed at her brother
Titan, for of her self she hath none other.

Her guise was gray, and full of spots black,
And on her breast, a Churle painted full even,
Bearing a bunsh of thorns upon his back,
Which for his theft might clim no nearer heaven.
Thus when they gathered were, these gods seven,
Mercurius they chosde with one assent,
To be fore-speaker in the Parliament.

Who had been there, and listned for to hear,
His facund tongue, and tearms exquisite,
Of Rhetorick the practick he might lear,
In brief Sermon, a pregnant Sermon write,
Before Cupid wailling his capalite,
Speirs the cause of that vocation,
And he anone shew his intention.

Lo (quoth Cupid) who will blaspheme the name
Of his own God, either in word or deed,
To all the gods he doth both lack and shame,
And should have bitter pains for his meed:
I say this by yon wretched Cressеid,
The which through me was sometime Queen of love,

Ye, and my Mother starkly can reprove.

Saying of her great infelicitie,
I was the cause, and my mother Venus,
She called a blind goddesse, and might not see,
With slander and defame injurious:
Thus her living, unclean, and leacherous,
She would return on me, and on my Mother,
To whom I shew my grace above all other.

And since ye are all seven deificate,
Participant of divine Sapience:
This great injure done to our high estate,
We think with pain, we should make recompense,
Was never to goddesse done such violence:
As well for you, as for my self, I say,
Therefore go help to revenge, I you pray.

Mercurius to Cupid gave answer;
And said, Sir King, my counsel is that ye
Utter you to the highest Planet here,
And take to him the lowest of degree,
The pain of Cresseid for to modifie:
As god Saturn, with him take Cynthia,
I am content (quoth he) to take these twa.

Then Cynthia, when Saturn past away,
Out of her seat descended down belyve:
And read a Bill on Cresseid where she lay,
Containing this sentence definitive:
From heat of body, I do thee here deprive,
And to thy sickness there shall be no cure,
But in dolour thy dayes to endure.

Thy Chrystal eyn, mingled with blod I make,
Thy voice so clear, unpleasant, hoyse, and hace:
Thy lusty lyre, over-spread with spots black,
And lumps haw, appearing in thy face,
Where thou comes, each man shall leave the place:
Thus shalt thou go, begging from house to house,
With Cup and Clapper, like a Lazarus.

This doleful Dream, this Ugly Vision,
Brought to an end, Cresseid from it awoke:
And all that Court and Convocation
Vanisht away: then rose she up and tuik
A polisht glasse, and her shadow could luik,
And when she saw her face so deformate,
Sa she in heart was wo enough, God wate.

Weeping full sore, lo, what it is (quoth she)
With frouard language for to mute or stear,
Our crabbed goddesse, and so is seen on me:
My blasphemung now have I bought full dear,
All earthly joy and mirth I set arier,
Alace, this day! alace, this wofull tide!
When I began with my goddesse to chide.

Then thus proceeded Saturn, and the Moon,
When they the matter ripely had digest:
For the despight to Cupid she had done,
And to Venus, open, and manifest:
In all her life with pain to be oppress,
And torment sore, with sickneſſe incurable,
And to all Lovers be abominable.

This doleful sentence Saturn tuik on hand,

And passed down where careful Cresseid lay,
And on her head he laid a frosty wand:
Then lawfully on this wise can he say;
Thy great fairnesse, and all thy beauty gay,
Thy wanton blood, and eke thy golden hair,
Here I exclude from thee for evermair.

I change thy mirth into Melancholie,
Which is the Mother of all pensivenesse:
Thy moisture, and thine heat, in cold and dry:
Thine insolence, thy play, and wantonnesse,
To great disease: thy pomp, and thy richnesse,
In mortall need, and great penurity,
Thou suffer shalt, and as a Beggar dy.

O cruel Saturn, froward, and angry,
Hard is thy doom, and to malicious,
On fair Cresseid: why hast thou no mercy,
Which was so sweet, gentle, and amorous?
Withdraw thy sentence, and be gracious:
As thou wast never, so shewis thou thy deed,
A wrackful sentence given on fair Cresseid.

By this was said, a child came from the Hall,
To warn Cresseid, the Supper was ready:
First knocked at the door, and then could call,
Madam, your Father bids you come in hy,
He hath marvel so long in grouf you ly:
And saith, your prayers be to long some deal,
The gods do know all your intent full well.

(Quoth she) fair child, go to my Father dear,
And pray him come to speak with me anone:

And

And so he did, and said, Daughter, what chear?
Alace (quoth she) Father, my mirth is gone.
How so (quoth he) And she can all expone,
As I have told the vengeance and the wrack,
For her trespalle Cupid could on her take.

He loked on her ugly Lipper face,
The which before was white as Lilly flowre:
Wringing his hands, he oft-times said, alace!
That he lived to see that woful hour:
For he knew well that there was no succour
To her sickneſſe, and that doubled his pain:
Thus was there care enough betwœn the twain.

When they together mourned had full long:
Quoth Creſſeid, Father, I would not be kend,
Therefore in secret wayes you let me gang,
To yon Hoſpital at the towns end,
And thither some meat, for Charity me send,
To live upon: for all mirth in this eard
Is from me gone, such is my wicked weard.

Then in a Mantle, and a baver Hat,
With Cup, and Clapper wonder prively,
He opened a secret gate, and out thereat
Convoyed her, that no man should espy:
There to a Village, half a Mile there-by,
Delivered in at the Hoſpital house,
And daily sent her part of his almous.

Some knew her well, & some had no knowledge
Of her, because she was so deformed,
With Byles black, over-spread in her visage,

And

And her fair colour faded, and altred:
Yet they præsumed for her hie regrate,
And still mourning, she was of noble kin,
With better will therefore, they took her in.

The day passed, and Phœbus went to rest,
The Clouds black overwhelmed all the Sky;
God wot, if Cresseid was a sorry guest,
Seeing that uncouth Fare and Harberie:
But meat or drink, she dressed her to lye,
In a dark corner of the house alone,
And on this wise weeping she made her moan.

The Complaint of Cresseid.

O Sop of sorrow! sunken into care;
Dcative Cresseid! for now and evermaire:
Gone is thy joy, and all thy mirth on eird,
Of all blythnesse, now art thou blaikned bair:
There is no salve may save or sound thy sair:
Fell is thy Fortune, wicked is thy wierd:
Thy blisse is banisht, and thy bail on brierd.
Under the earth, God if I graved wair,
Where none of Greece, nor Troy might hierd.

Where is thy Chalmer wantonly beseen,
With burely bed, and bonkers browdred breen,
Spices and wine to thy collation:
Thy cups all of gold and silver sheen:
Thy sweat-meats, serued in plaits clean,
With Saffron, and sause of a good season:
Thy gay garments with many goodly gown;
Thy pleasant Lane pinned with golden pin:
All is arier thy great royal renown,

Where is thy garden, with thy grasses gay,
And fresh flowres, with the Queen Floray?
And planted pleasantly in every plain,
Where thou wast wont full merrily in May,
To walk, and take the dew by it was day,
And hear the Perle, and Mavis many one,
With Ladies fair in caroling to gain:
And seen the royal rinkes in their array,
In garments gay garnisht on every grain.

Thy great triumphant fame, and hie honour,
Where thou wast called of earthly wights flowr,
All is decayed, thy werd is waltered so:
Thy high estate is turned in darknesse dour,
Thy Lipper Lodge take for thy burely Bower,
And for thy bed take thou a bunsh of stro:
For wailed wine, and meats thou hadst tho,
Take mowldy bread, Perry, and Cider lowre:
But Cup and Clapper now is all ago.

My clear voice, and courtly caroling,
Where I was wont with Ladies fair to sing:
Is rank and rouk, full hideous hoar and hace,
My pleasant Port, all others excelling,
Of lustinesse I was held most conding:
Now is deformed the figure of my face,
To look on it no lead now liking hes:
Sowped in syte, I say, with sore sighing,
Lodged amongst the Lipper leed, alace!

O Ladies fair of Troy and Greece attend
My misery, which none may comprehend:

My

My frivole Fortune, mine infelicity,
My great mischief, which no man can commend,
Beware in time approaches near the end,
And in your minde a Mirrour make of me:
As I am now, peradventure that ye
For all your might may come to that same end,
Or else worse, if any worse may be.

Nought is your fairnesse, but a fading flowr:
Nought is your famous laud, and hie honour,
But winde inflate in other mens ears:
Your rosing red in rotting shall retour,
Example make of me in your memour,
Which of such things woful witnesse bears:
All wealth on earth away as winde it wears:
Beware therefore, approaches near your hour,
Fortune is fickel when she begins and stears.

THus chiding with her dreary destiny,
Weeping, she woke the night from end to end,
But all in vain: her dole, her careful cry,
Might not remead, nor yet her mourning mend:
A Lipper Lady rose, and till her wend:
And said, Why spurnest thou against the wall,
To slay thy self, and mend nothing at all?

Since thy weeping doth double but thy wo,
I counsel thee make vertue of a need:
Go lear to clap the Clapper to and fro,
And lear after the Law of Lipper leed.
There was no bute but forth with then she yed,
From place to place, while cold and hunger fair,
Compelled her to be a rank Beggair.

That self same time of Troy the Garison,
Which had a Chiftain, worthy Troylus:
Through jeopardy of war had stricken down,
Knights of Greece, in number marvellous:
With great triumph, and laud victorious,
Again to Troy right royally they rode,
The way where Cresseid with the Lippers bode.

Seeing the troup, they came all with a steven,
They gave a cry, and shook their claps good speed:
Said, worthy Lords, for Gods love of Heaven,
To us Lipper, part of your alms deed.
Then to their cry, noble Troylus took heed,
Having pitty, near by the place can passe,
Where Cresseid was, not knowing what she was.

Then upon him she cast up both her een,
And with a blink it came into his thought,
That he sometime before her face had seen,
But she was in such plyte he knew her nought:
Yet then her look into his minde it brought
The sweet visage, and amorous blenking,
Of fair Cresseid sometime his own Darling.

No wonder was, suppose in minde that he,
Took her figure so soon: and lo now why?
The idol of a thing in face may be
So deep imprinted in the fantasie,
That it deludes the wits outwardly:
And so appears in form and like estate,
Within the minde as it was figurate.

A spark of love then till his heart can spring,

And

And kindled all his body in a fire:
With hot fever, a sweat and trembling
Him took, while he was ready to expire,
To bear his shield his breast began to tyre:
Within a while he changed many hew,
And nevertheless not one another knew.

For Knightly pitty, and memoriall,
Of fair Cresseid, a Girdle can he take,
A purse of Gold, and many gay Jewell,
And in the skirt of Cresseid down can swake,
Then rode away, and not a word he spake:
Pensive in heart, while he came to the town,
And for great care, some say, almost fell down.

The Leapper folk to Cresseid then could draw,
To see the equal distribution
Of the almous: but when the gold they saw,
Each one to other privily can rown,
And said, Yon Lord hath more affection,
How ever it be, unto yon Lazarus,
Than to us all, we know by his almous.

What Lord is yon, quoth she, have ye no feill,
Hath done to us so great humanitie?
Yea (quoth a Leaper man) I know him well,
Sir Troylus, he is gentle, and free.
When Cresseid understood that it was he,
Stiffer than Steel there start a bitter stound,
Throughout her heart, and fell down to the ground.

When she overcame, with sighing sore and sad,
With many a careful cry and cold ochane:

Now

Now is my breast with stormy stounds stad:
Wrapped in wo, a wretchful will of wane.
Then fell in swown, full oft ere she would fane,
And ever in her swowning cryed she thus,
O false Cresseid, and true Knight Troylus.

Thy love, thy lawty, and thy gentleness,
I counted smal in my prosperitie:
So effiated I was in wantonness,
And clam upon the fickle wheel so hie:
All faith and love I promist unto thée,
Was in it self fickle and frivolous.
O false Cresseid, and true Knight Troylus.

For love of me thou keepest countenance,
Honest and chaste in conversation,
Of all women protector and defence
Thou wast, and helped their opinion:
My minde in fleshly foul affection
Was enclined, to love Lecherous.
Fye, false Cresseid, and true Knight Troylus.

Lovers beware, and take good heed about,
Whom that ye love, for whom ye suffer pain:
I let you wit, there is right few thereout,
Whom ye may trust, to have true love again:
Prove when ye will, your labour is in vain,
Therefore I red ye take them as ye find,
For they are sad as Weather-cock in wind.

Because I know the great unstableness,
Brickle as glasse, unto my self I say:
Trusting in other as great unfaithfulness,

As

As inconstant, and as untrue of fey:
Though some be true, I wot right few are they,
Who finds truth, let him his Lady rule,
None but my self, as now I will accuse.

When this was said, with paper she sat down,
And on this manner made her Testament.
HEre I bequeath my Corps and Carrion,
With worms and toades to be riven and rent:
My Cup and Clapper, and mine Ornament,
And all my gold, the Leapper folk shall have,
When I am dead, to bury me in Grave.

This royal Ring set with the Ruby red,
Which Troylus in Dowry to me send:
To him again I leave, when I am dead,
To make my careful death unto him kend.
Thus I conclude, and shortly make an end:
My sp'rit I leave to Diane where she dwels,
To walk with her in waste woods and wels.

O Diomed, thou hast both Broch and Belt,
Which Troylus gave me in tokening,
Of his true love, and with that word she swelt,
And syn a Lipper-man took off the Ring,
Then buried her withoutten tarrying:
To Troylus forth-with the Ring he bare,
And of Cresseid the death he can declare.

When he had heard the great infirmity,
Her Legacie, and Lamentation,
And how she ended in such poverty:
He swelt for wo, and fell down in a swown

For

For sorrow, his heart to brast was ready bown;
Sighing full sadly, said I can do no more,
She was untrue, and wo is me therefore.

Some said, he made a tomb of Marble gay,
And wrote her name and superscription,
And laid it on her Grave where she lay,
In golden Letters, containing this reason;
Lo, clear Ladies, fair Cresseid of Troy the town,
Sometime counted the flowr of woman-head,
Under this stone, saith Lipper lyes dead.

Now worthy women in this Ballad short,
Made for your worship and instruction:
Of Charity, I monish, and exhort,
Wing not your love with false disception;
Bear in your mind this short conclusion,
Of fair Cresseid, as I have said before,
Since she is dead, I speak of her no more.

FINIS.

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